



State Representative

HANS DUNSHEE

39th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

R E P O R T

A Report to the 39th Legislative District

February 1998

Friends and Neighbors:

Ever since the 1997 Legislature adjourned last May, I've been listening to and talking with the people of the 39th District--that's you. I've visited with you in your homes and on the street. I've had numerous town hall meetings. You've called me at my home and you've sent me letters, e-mails and faxes.

I've learned a lot from talking to people. This is a district made up of working families and retired folks. Young or not so young, we're looking for a square deal from our government, and we're disturbed by what we see as a growing imbalance of power that favors special interests and lobbyists over regular people.

I've also learned that you're as concerned as I am about the world getting to be a tougher and tougher place. Violent crimes and drunk drivers seem to present more of a danger to our quality of life than ever before, and I plan to put my weight behind solid legislation to increase public safety.

As I said, I've spent many hours listening to citizens about their priorities. This newsletter deals with some of what I heard, and these are some of the priorities I believe I share with the good people of the 39th District.

Let me know what you think.

Sincerely,

Hans Dunshee

Olympia office:

P.O. Box 40600
336 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

E-mail:

dunshee_ha@leg.wa.gov

Office phone:

(360) 786-7804

Home phone:

(425) 338-7876

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

February 21 is Town Hall Day in the 39th District.

Saturday, February 21

9 to 11 a.m.

Monroe PUD
120 E. Fremont St.

12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Snohomish PUD
807 Rainier St.

3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Lake Stevens Senior Center
1808 Main St.

**See you there.
Please call me at
(360) 786-7804
if you need more
information.**

Legislative Homepage:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov>

Toll-free Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

LET'S GET SMART

I want state spending on K-12 education restored to at least the level it stood at in 1993. Good education means good jobs for our kids and that should be the legislature's priority. If we don't give our children a decent chance we haven't done our job. We need to restore money to the classrooms. And those classrooms, by the way, are the **FOURTH-MOST-CROWDED** in the U.S.

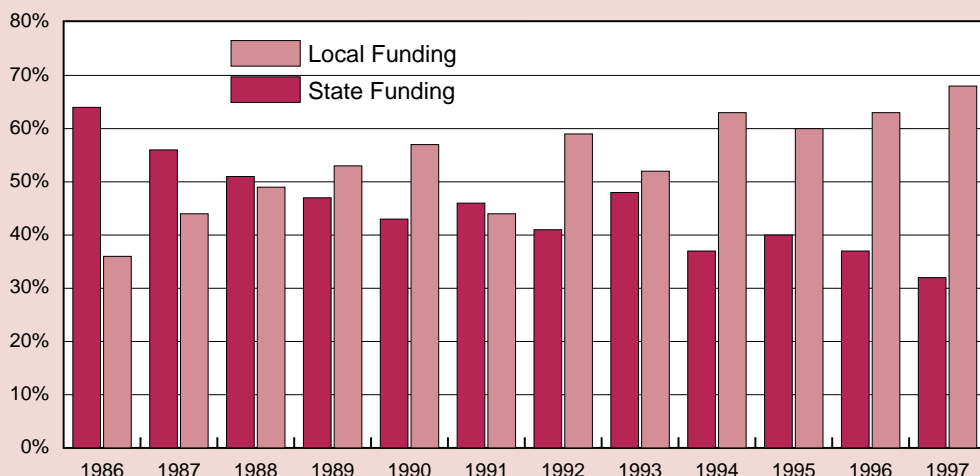
School construction costs are also being shifted to local property taxpayers by the legislature over the last 10 years. You can see this trend in your tax bill, but

unless you keep close track from year to year you may not be aware of how drastic this shift has been. Are you sitting down? If so, take a look at the chart below.

This has got to be reversed. Last year I supported an effort to dedicate lottery money to school construction, but that alone cannot solve the long-term decline. The legislature needs to do the job and fund school construction. I'm cosponsoring a bill this session that would exempt school construction monies from the state sales tax, and while it will be of some value, it certainly won't make up for the state's shirking its duty over the last decade.

As a final word on education, I want to restate my continuing support for teacher pay raises. Like our similarly underpaid law enforcement professionals, teachers have one of the hardest and most important jobs in our society. I keep believing that eventually we'll get our priorities right and realize what false economy it is to short-change our teachers . . . and our kids.

State vs. Local School Construction Funding (in percentages)

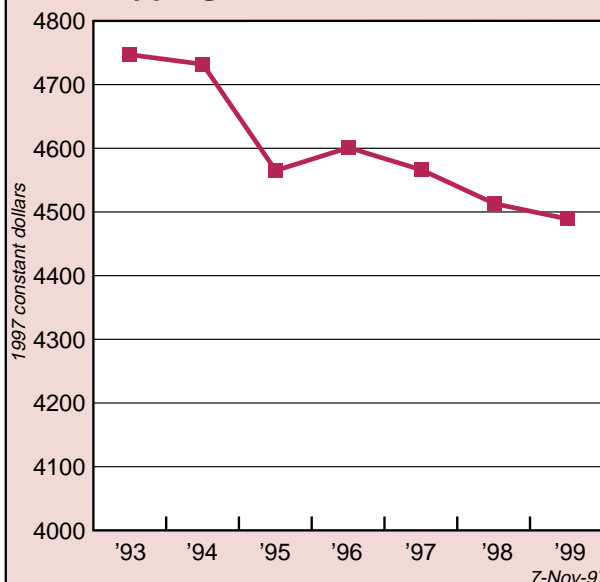


EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES

Unfunded mandates are hurting local services. Our communities face a growing list of unfunded mandates from the legislature. I am going to propose cutting state sales tax by one-tenth of a cent and allowing local authorities to raise, if they want, their sales tax by the same amount. This is **NOT** a tax increase. It simply shifts to local governments the ability to collect and allocate this money to pay for at least part of the unfunded mandates the legislature has imposed in the last few years.

To Snohomish County this could mean \$1.9 million dollars a year, money that could be used to hire more deputies or fix road problems. To our communities this will be needed help.

School spending has been stagnant or dropping since 1993



Working for Working Families

JUST WRITE THE CHECK

If the legislature refuses to restore education funding or meet their obligation to local communities and wants to play the special-interest tax-cut game once again, I suggest we take the total of all their proposed special interest tax cuts, divide that total by the number of people in the state, and Just Write a Check to every person. It's simple, fair, and equal . . . and it's no game.

This method of rebating taxes also has the advantage of preventing a tax increase in the future. In 1982 the Republican-controlled legislature, and in 1993 the Democrat-controlled legislature, each had to raise taxes to cover deficits. With the Just Write the Check method of distributing the surplus, the revenue-generating ability remains intact in case we encounter the kind of economic downturn that led to the two tax increases I mentioned. We can have our rebate and our reserve too. I want to stop all the special deals and Just Write the Check. It's fair simple and equal.

What do I mean when I talk about special-interest tax cuts? Here are just a few examples, no more or less ludicrous than most, of tax cuts designed to benefit someone . . . someone who most likely wasn't you. The fact that these and plenty of others were correctly vetoed by the governor doesn't alter the fact that they were dreamed up and approved by lawmakers who claim to represent the people of Washington.

Exempt owners of coin-op car washes from sales tax ...	\$4,100,000
B&O break for cubed alfalfa producers	\$478,000
Bare boat charter owner tax exemption	\$1,300,000
Intangible property tax exemption	\$589,000
Insurance company guaranteed fund	\$4,800,000
Soda syrup tax exemption	\$7,700,000

That last item, by the way, was designed to do one thing, and one thing only, and it wouldn't have lowered the cost of your Big Gulp by a penny. This was a giveaway of almost \$8 million dollars, with the lion's share going to huge multinational fast-food chains like McDonald's. Who deserves a break today?

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

I know I'm not alone in my belief that Americans are becoming more cynical and discouraged about the way our political system works. People see that big money controls politics and they don't feel they have a voice. Then they don't participate. Democracy is stronger when more people participate. Our voter turnout rate indicates we need to restore people's confidence in the system.

I don't think it's a coincidence that the influence of big money and special interests has been increasing at the same time participation by individual voters has been decreasing. Our democracy is threatened by the public's belief that the government is a wholly owned subsidiary of big money interests--and judging from some of the actions you've seen in Olympia during the last few sessions, who's to say you're wrong?

I'll be introducing a bill this session designed to level the playing field and get the influence of big money out of our electoral process.

- A Spending limits for all campaigns.** Unless we resign ourselves to the idea of selling our elections to the highest bidder, we've got to get spending under control.
- B The Clean Election Account.** Similar to a recently passed Maine initiative, this account would be partially financed by a tax on political work done by lobbyists, consultants and other members of the army of professionals who stand between you and the elected officials who are supposed to your employees.
- C Strengthen the Public Disclosure Commission** that oversees campaigns and elections. Impose stiffer fines for blatant offenders, and restrict the special interest PACs that would like to cut you out of the electoral process altogether.

(continued on back)

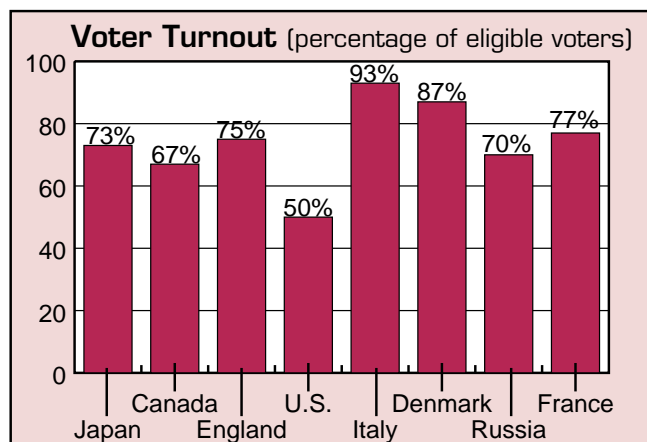
Representative **HANS DUNSHEE**

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM *(continued)*

We need to restore citizen confidence in democracy and the first step is to increase the citizen's voice by decreasing the influence of money. I truly believe our country's health is at stake.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Last year the folks in Olympia were sharply divided on quite a few issues, but I was happy to see a true bipartisan approach to juvenile justice reform. It was just a start, though. I'm calling this year for us to go farther toward addressing the remaining problems we face. We need to look at stronger prevention of juvenile crime and common-sense approaches to mentally ill offenders. For the sake of our neighborhoods, and our neighbors, we have to institute effective new policies to govern juvenile detention centers and group homes. And I'm hopeful, from what I've heard during the interim, that this can be the year we finally begin to turn back the tragic tide of drunk driving. I support lowering the criminal line from the present .10 percent to .08 percent of blood alcohol, as well as instituting a number of other measures to make our roads safer.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I would appreciate your input on some of the issues we're going to be wrestling with during the next 60 days. Please call, e-mail or fax my office in Olympia with your opinions about these and other questions.

- Should Affirmative Action should be abolished?
- Should we raise the gas tax?
- Should utility deregulation go forward?
- How can we increase voter turnout?

I'm proud to be working for the working families of Snohomish County.

Hans

**A Report
to the 39th
Legislative
District**

Printed on recycled paper

P. O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Hans Dunshee
Representative

BULK RATE
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing